

**MINISTRY
PARTNERSHIP
SEMINAR**



NARARAVALLEY
BAPTIST CHURCH

contents

section one	What is Ministry Partnership?	3
section two	Vision & Values	5
section three	Expectations	9
	1. Grace	10
	2. Growth	12
	3. Gatherings	18
	4. Gifts	20
	5. Giving	23
	6. Governance	24
section four	Want To Become A Ministry Partner?	27

Section 1

what is ministry partnership?



In Acts 2:42-47 we read of a church community that was DEVOTED to the apostles teaching, each other, the breaking of bread (communion) and prayer. Ministry Partnership provides a way to express that devotion/commitment in these important areas.

We encourage you to consider Ministry Partnership for three reasons:

1. There's something significant in making a public declaration about what you're committed to (baptism is a perfect case in point)
2. There's something significant in being committed to a multigenerational community and modelling commitment to other generations who are looking to you
3. We're keen to have people prayerfully engaged in some key decisions that from time to time are brought to Ministry Partners (eg. calling Pastors to join the Pastoral team, facilities, etc)

Ministry Partnership is a way of saying to God and the church family of NVBC that ... *"I'm in. I'm committed to what God is doing in this place. This church is family for me. I want to invest into this church and be invested into."*

Some years ago, we used to use the term “Members” to describe what we’re considering in this course. “Membership” tends to speak of ‘privileges and perks’.

Whilst we certainly care for one another, the whole idea of ‘privileges and perks’ cuts against the grain of what Ministry Partnership is all about. The heart behind Ministry Partnership is summed up in Paul’s words in Philippians 1:4-6 ...

*“In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your **partnership in the gospel** from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”*

Ministry Partnership is about serving God together as we seek to see the fulfilment of our Vision.

Section 2

vision & values



The Vision of NVBC is to be a church that is:

Desperate For God, Passionate For People

After six months of seeking God's Vision for NVBC, Pastor Craig was inspired by pivotal story in the life of Jesus.

In Mark 12, he read of Jesus being asked: "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"

Jesus wasn't constrained to one command, but instead says ...

*"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this:
'Love your neighbor as yourself."*

Our Vision is to be a church that embodies what Jesus says is central:

- a desperation for God borne out of a recognition of His glory and our complete dependance upon Him, and
- a passion for people, because each person is made in God's image and has intrinsic value

Our Vision is spelled in even greater detail in "The Church We See" (see next page).

the church we see

We see a church where people far from God are becoming fully devoted followers of Christ.

We see a church that shapes and influences culture. A church where the frequency and magnitude of life change is so significant that it cannot be ignored.

We see a church that continually seeks God, like lungs seek air. A church where faith-filled prayer intersects with the power and will of God, and earth reflects heaven.

We see a church that communicates the Gospel so clearly in word, deed and sign that daily people are becoming followers of Jesus. A church that knows that the stakes we're dealing with are eternal and seeks to invest there.

We see a church that reflects God's heart for the nations. A church that desires to see God's kingdom grow beyond the borders of its own region, to our nation and the world.

We see a church that creatively engages senses and imaginations whenever and wherever it meets. A church where creativity honours God, inspires people and is released to be a blessing beyond its own boundaries.

We see a church where facilities overflow with the volume of people becoming followers of Jesus and enables creativity to be expressed with excellence.

We see a church that is renowned for its depth of love. A church of such irresistible acceptance and belonging that people are: drawn to it, changed by it, and begin to exhibit it.

We see a church that is a voice of hope to those who have none. A church where the marginalised, the broke, the crushed and the dejected are welcomed, empowered, find greater wholeness and are released to be a blessing to others.

We see a church that walks by faith. A church that laughs at complacency and where faith-based risks are taken, because the hand of God is evident.

We see a church that is generous. A church that holds resources God has entrusted to us with an open hand and is a river of blessing to others.

We see a church where the generations join together to worship and serve God. A church that honours those who have gone before and the wisdom they bring, yet continues to connect in contemporary ways with this generation.

We see a church that is energized and excited by God's empowering presence. A church where enthusiasm and passion are the norm. A church where the sound of laughter echoes throughout our hallways.

Pastor Craig Corkill

prepare | sow | grow

Vision is about seeking God and seeing where He is leading. Yet Vision isn't the end of the journey ... it's just the beginning.

Vision needs to find tangible expression – we need to have a clear idea of how this Vision can be implemented.

A significant part of our journey as a church has been extensive reflection on the Parable Of The Sower, found in Luke 8:1-15. In this parable we encounter many principles, yet there are three that have provided a practical model of 'how to' for our Vision. They are summed up in three words: Prepare | Sow | Grow

Prepare – is all about 'preparing the soil'. Preparing the soil of people's lives involves both investing in genuine relationship with those who don't know Jesus and praying that their hearts are 'good soil' – receptive to the seed of the Gospel.

Sow – is about sowing the Gospel in word, deed and sign. Our desire is to be those who communicate a verbal witness, demonstrate the reality of the Gospel with our lives, and demonstrate the reality of the Gospel through the miraculous.

Grow – sees us investing into the on-going growth of our relationship with Jesus Christ. Our goal is not simply to make disciples, but rather to make disciples who are disciple-makers.

values

With God's Word as our foundation, and in light of our Vision of being a church that is:

Desperate For God, Passionate For People

what matters most at NVBC is captured in these five value statements.



Renewed and Renewing

Experiencing on-going transformation



Real and Relational

Nurturing authentic community across generations



Movement not monument

Multiplying disciples, leaders & churches together



A Pioneering People

Embracing faith-based risks



Grateful and Generous

Taking nothing for granted

Section 3



expectations

If you've ever been promised one thing, but been delivered something completely different, you know the importance of clear expectations.

Clear expectations:

- decrease frustration and conflict
- increase the sense that this is a 'safe' place to be part of
- keep us focused on what's important

When approaching Ministry Partnership, we want to be clear about the expectations we have of one another so that we can more effectively press on in the fulfilment of the Vision.

Our expectations of one another revolve around "The 6G's":

1. Grace
2. Growth
3. Gatherings
4. Gifts
5. Giving
6. Governance

3.1 grace

A foundational expectation of all Ministry Partners is that they have already accepted Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord (Leader).

If you are currently uncertain about whether you have accepted Jesus in this way, please speak to your Ministry Partnership Seminar leader, as they'd love to assist you in taking this important step of faith.

At NVBC, there are two main ways we regularly celebrate God's saving grace to us ... baptism and communion (see next page).

believer's baptism

Believer's baptism is a public declaration of the grace and leadership of Jesus Christ over your life. As the apostle Paul reflects in Romans 6, baptism sees us identify with the death & burial of Jesus as we dip under the water, and identify with the resurrection life of Jesus as we rise up out of the water.

At NVBC, we recognise that other denominations christen infants and practice adult 'confirmation' as a confession of faith in Jesus as Lord and Saviour. If you feel strongly that believer's baptism is redundant for you as you've already made a *genuine public confession* of faith at your Confirmation, then we do not want this to be stumbling block to your commitment to partnership with us as a church.

We welcome you, acknowledging this difference, knowing that we are part of a much bigger Body of Christ.

Equally, we also ask every person considering Ministry Partnership to consider believer's baptism if they have not made a public declaration of faith like this in the past. Your Ministry Partnership Seminar leader will be more than happy to speak with you about this next step.

communion

A vital and intimate part celebrating God's saving grace to us, is engaging together in communion, also known in the Bible as the 'Lord's Supper' and the 'breaking of bread'.

At NVBC we normally celebrate communion monthly, both in our AM and PM services, and find that these times are important as:

- A celebration of our forgiveness in Christ
- An expression of our oneness in Christ
- An anticipation of completeness in Christ

We enjoy a variety of people leading communion, and do not restrict this to only those who are pastors.

In addition to Sundays, we'll also celebrate at other times such as: Growth Groups; leadership gatherings; and as a part of hospitality in homes.

walk in grace

In addition to being saved by grace, we are committed to living in grace (Galatians 1:6) with one another.

Whilst living by grace will be demonstrated in a range of ways, we have an expectation that this grace will be evidenced in:

- Believing the best of each other
- Refusing to gossip about each other
- Extending forgiveness to one another
- Following the principles of Matthew 18:15-20 when we find ourselves in conflict
- Speaking to a pastor if you have an issue with NVBC, rather than becoming bitter (Hebrews 12:15)

3.2 growth

Whilst a foundational expectation of all Ministry Partners is that they have accepted the saving grace of Jesus, our second expectation is that we will continue to ‘grow in grace’, as the apostle Peter describes it (2 Peter 3:18).

We don’t see grace as simply having our ‘heaven ticket’ punched, we have the expectation that every Ministry Partner will continue to cooperate with the Holy Spirit who empowers and enables us to grow. Put simply, our goal is not to make ‘converts’ of Jesus, it’s to make disciples of Jesus who are equipped to make disciples of Jesus.

As Paul says in Galatians 5:25 ...

“Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit”.

In other words, we have an expectation that we will each position ourselves so that we can hear and obey the Spirit’s promptings. At NVBC, we encourage all Ministry Partners to engage in a range of spiritual practices* that assist this expectation.

These practices are grouped into:

1. **Internal Practices** – practices that seek to deepen my relationship with God
2. **Missional Practices** – practices that help me engage more fully in God’s mission in the world

*Note: These six spiritual practices are not an ‘exhaustive’ list. For further reading on spiritual practices, the following books may be helpful:

John Ortberg *“The Life You’ve Always Wanted”*

Dallas Willard *“The Spirit Of The Disciplines”*

James Bryan Smith *“The Good & Beautiful God”*

Michael Frost *“Surprise The World”*

internal practices

Read & Reflect On The Bible

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16

Research has identified that the number one facilitator of spiritual growth for people is reading and reflecting on the Bible.

We recognise that just as healthy growth sees a child feeding itself early in life, so too healthy spiritual growth sees us developing habits of feeding ourselves. If you only physically ate once a week on a Sunday morning/evening, your growth would be severely limited. Equally, if you only ‘eat’ spiritually once a week on a Sunday morning/evening, your spiritual growth will be stunted.

At NVBC, we encourage you to develop an intentional habit of reading and reflecting on the Bible for yourself. If you don’t have a regular Bible reading plan, please speak with your Ministry Partnership Seminar leader for some help.

Further reading: Fee & Stuart “How to Read the Bible For All Its Worth”

Prayer

“Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.” Luke 5:16

Whilst our time together on Sundays and in Growth Groups are important times of gathered prayer, times where it’s just you and God are vital for your spiritual growth.

As Luke reflects, this was a key priority in the life of Jesus. These times of solitude appear to have ‘fuelled’ His life and ministry, and equally are vital for our lives to be ‘fuelled’ by God.

Ministry Partners are encouraged, during their times of private prayer, to be seeking God for the outworking of His will and purposes at NVBC. As Pastor Craig says regularly: *“This is a spiritual endeavour, and requires spiritual resource”*.

Further reading: Robinson “Praying The Price”

Tithing

“But since you excel in everything - in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you - see that you also excel in this grace of giving.” 2 Corinthians 8:7

We will be discussing the spiritual practice of tithing in a future section of this course. Put simply though, our desire is to honour God with our resources and to be a blessing to others – locally, regionally and globally.

Further reading: Baumer & Cortines “God and Money: How We Discovered True Riches at Harvard Business School”

Fasting

“But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.” Matthew 6:17-18

Fasting has often been a misunderstood spiritual practice. Fasting is an act of self-denial, for the purpose of intensifying and expressing our desperation for God. This self-denial is usually in the area of food, but can be expressed in other ways also. In essence we are saying *“I’d rather go without my daily food, than go on as I am. My body isn’t my first priority – right now I’m seeking God”*.

Further reading: Corkill “Fasting And Spiritual Breakthrough”

missional practices (B.E.L.L.S.)¹

Bless

“And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.” 2 Corinthians 9:8

Part of the history of the term “to bless” carried with it the idea of “adding strength to another’s arm.” In this respect, to bless others is to build them up, to fill them with encouragement for them to increase in strength and prosperity.

Whether it be through word, actions or gifts we seek to bless not only those who are already followers of Jesus, but those who are not.

Eat

“Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.” 1 Peter 4:9

Eating has been a central Christian practice since the beginning of our movement. Christians have shared in a meal together and often used that as a space to celebrate communion.

Equally, Christians have offered ‘hospitality’ (the Greek word in 1 Peter 4:9 literally means ‘love of strangers’) to those who are not followers of Jesus. There is something profoundly spiritual about sharing a meal with others and in that space, developing deep relationships of trust and honour.

¹ . Our missional practices are taken from Mike Frost’s book *“Surprise The World”*.

Listen

“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth.”

John 16:13

Being attentive to the Holy Spirit – listening to His still small voice and obeying – is a vital practice not only our own spiritual growth, but also as we engage in God’s mission in our world.

In addition to be attentive to the Spirit throughout our day, this practice sees us carve out a block of time each week for silence and solitude, where we eliminate distractions and simply be with God.

Learn Christ

“I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.”

Philippians 3:10-11

The expression “to learn Christ” was a common one among the earliest Christians, but it’s not a phrase we use much these days, but it is a practice that speaks of immersing ourselves in the words and works of Jesus. We need to know him if we’re going to share him as the reason for the hope we have.

This practice sees us reading and re-reading the Gospels, studying the Gospels and listening to the Gospels. The goal is that we would more accurately reflect Jesus in the context in which He’s placed us.

Sent

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Matthew 28:19-20

The final habit is to begin identifying yourself as a missionary – a sent one – by journaling the ways you’re engaged in making disciples.

We encourage you to make daily journal entries or set aside some time at the end of each week to look back over the last seven days to recall how you’ve either announced or demonstrated God’s universal reign, even if it’s in the smallest of ways.

3.3 gatherings

If you remove a burning coal from a fire, you'll notice that it turns from a fiery red, to a cold grey the longer it's separate from the fire. The same is often true spiritually as well. Disconnection from God's people can often result in a 'cooling' of our relationship with God.

At NVBC, in addition to your own social gatherings with people, we have an expectation of one another that each week we'll participate in a Sunday service and in a Growth Group.

Both expressions of community are different, yet vital.

Sunday Services

At our Sunday services, you have the opportunity to:

- participate in worship
- learn from Bible-based preaching
- pray together
- express generosity in giving
- encourage others & be encouraged
- use spiritual gifts for the building up of others, and
- collectively celebrate what God is doing in and through us

Sadly, statistics reveal that on any given Sunday, 1/3 of a congregation are away. Some are absent for very valid reasons (eg. Illness), others for less sound reasons (eg. 'I couldn't be bothered getting out of bed') .

At NVBC we want to buck that trend. We value weekly participation in Sunday services as they are important times for us as a family. We seek to provide Sunday services that are engaging, empowering & equipping – times that will further assist your spiritual growth

Connect Groups

At NVBC it is our desire to see the church of Jesus Christ grow as big as possible as we reach out in the community to touch lives in Jesus name.

However, we recognise that it is impossible to know more than fifty people in a significant way. It is possible though, to know a small group of 6 – 12 people quite intimately.

In light of this Connect Groups have increasingly formed an important foundation to our identity and mission as a church.

Each week small groups of 6–12 people meet in homes across the Central Coast. They meet on various days and at various times so that as many people as possible can be part of a growth group.

Their purpose is to build up one another and to grow as multiplying disciples Jesus Christ. Before serving in a volunteer role, we ask people to have been in a Connect Group for a minimum of three months.

For us at NVBC the focus of our Connect Groups are expressed as:

- **A**uthentic relationships
- **B**ible study [that transforms daily living]
- **C**aring for one another [which embraces the social, emotional and practical needs of each member of the group]. Growth Groups provide the primary place of Pastoral Care at NVBC.
- **D**edicated prayer for one another in the power of the Holy Spirit

3.4 gifts

The Holy Spirit has given you spiritual gifts, and He's given them to you for a purpose. The apostle Paul puts it this way ...

*“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. **Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.** Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.”*

1 Corinthians 12:4-7,12

The image of ‘the body’ which Paul uses here, speaks to the reality that we need each other if we’re going to see our Vision come into being and genuinely care for one another. The ‘body’ paints a beautiful picture of interdependence and seeking to bless one another and the broader community.

The expectation that Paul describes, and that we continue to call people to, is that each Ministry Partner will:

- discover
- develop, and
- deploy

their spiritual gifts.

Discover

At Narara Valley Baptist Church, we’re aware that your giftedness is a very important part of how God has ‘wired you up’. When you operate in these Spirit-empowered abilities, people around you are blessed, and you feel a sense of “I was made for this!”

We're also aware that spiritual gifts form one part of how God's wired you up.

To assist you in discerning how God has crafted you and where you'll most fruitfully serve Him, we have established our 'Wired For Purpose' course. Over 5 weeks you will consider your SHAPE:

Spiritual Gifts

Heart

Abilities

Personality

Experiences

If you would like to participate in a 'Wired For Purpose' course, please speak to your Ministry Partnership Seminar leader.

Develop

NVBC is committed to providing on-going training to help you develop the SHAPE God has given you, and where you seek to invest that SHAPE in ministry.

For example, those serving in Kids Church, Boolarng and as Growth Group, each run ministry-specific training throughout the year to grow team members' skills and understandings.

Similarly, all leaders at NVBC gather twice per year for times of inspiration, celebrate and equipping.

NVBC has a long history of providing internships in such areas as preaching, children's ministry and youth ministry for those who would like to significantly hone giftedness in a particular ministry area. These internships are normally 6-12 months in length and see participants engage in a range of ministry experiences, in-depth training, and extensive debriefs.

Deploy

At NVBC, you will often hear people speaking about going “into your field”. You have a unique sphere of influence – a unique set of relationships where God has called you to be His ambassador. We encourage you to use your SHAPE in within this sphere of influence and also consider how you might equally bless others through the wider ministry of NVBC.

Each year at NVBC we provide opportunity for people to consider where they might serve. These opportunities are normally grouped into:

- Serving on Sundays
- Serving Beyond Sundays

With that said, you do not need to wait till next year to consider where you might like to ‘deploy’ your SHAPE in ministry. Your Ministry Partnership Seminar leader can provide you with a comprehensive list of all Serving On & Beyond Sunday ministry opportunities or contact the Church Office.

3.5 giving

At NVBC we believe in the practice of bringing the first 10% of our income to God as an offering (the word 'tithe' means 10%). We see that this practice was first implemented in the Old Testament (before the giving of the Law), and affirmed by Jesus (Matthew 22:21). Any giving over and above the tithe, is considered an 'offering'.

At a more foundational level to the issue of tithes and offerings, is our desire to be a generous people as generosity reflects the character of God.

In 'The Church We See', it says *"We see a church that is generous. A church that holds resources God has entrusted to us with an open hand and is a river of blessing to others."*

As mentioned earlier we view intentional generosity as an important spiritual practice. Generosity has an ability to not only bless the life of the person/group we are giving to, but it also has an amazing by-product of freeing us from materialism and the 'pursuit of more'.

We are aware that speaking about giving within a church context is often challenging. It seems that in some churches, giving is spoken of incessantly and often accompanied by messages of guilt. In other churches, whole sections of the Bible are seemingly ignored as talking about giving is ignored.

At NVBC, the expectation we have of one another is that:

- Foundationally we will each grow a heart of generosity which reflects God's character
- We will each tithe our income
- Beyond the tithe we will give offerings

Please contact the Church Office regarding the ways you can give.

3.6 governance

Making Decisions

At NVBC we believe in the value of setting apart leaders to lead, rather than send every decision to a meeting of Ministry Partners. We equally believe in the value of seeking the broader wisdom of Ministry Partners at key times.

Ministry Partners:

- are provided with the Annual Budget for their affirmation and support through participating in a vote
- vote on decisions regarding the purchase or sale of property is brought to the Ministry Partners as a legislative requirement
- set apart Pastors, Elders and Church Board members for their ministry, and seek to make that ministry a joy and not a burden.

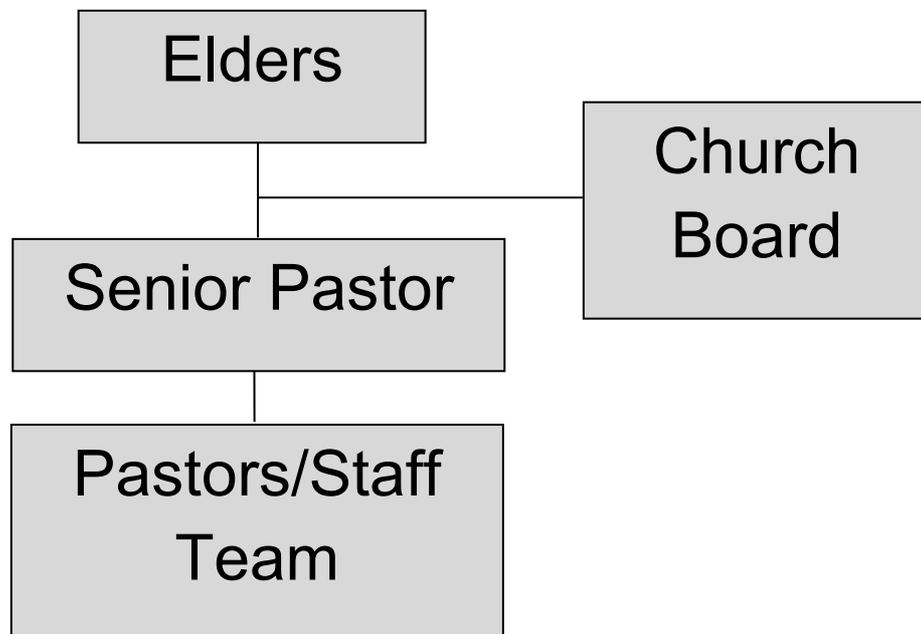
Our gathered times of making these decisions are called ‘Focus Meetings’. They are called Focus Meetings, because they help us to focus further on the Vision God has given to us and the way in which these decisions will serve that Vision.

Opportunities for discussion and/or questions regarding matters in a Focus Meeting agenda are provided before the meeting.

Structure

Within the New Testament we see a pragmatic and adaptive approach to governance. In the book of Acts and the Epistles we see a variety of governance structures being used, depending on the context and need of the church. This tells us that there’s no single “right” way to structure a church.

NVBC is structured in such a way as to empower ministry and see us achieving our Vision of being “Desperate For God, Passionate For People”. A diagram of our structure is included below.



Each group has a distinct, but complementary role:

- **Elders** – attend to the spiritual health of the church. Elders are ultimately responsible to ensure the church functions as God would have it. The Senior Pastor is an Elder and is accountable to the Chair of Elders. The Senior Pastor also leads the Pastors/Staff Team.
- **Pastors/Staff** – lead the development and implementation of the Vision, particularly within the ministry area to which they are called. The Pastors/Staff are responsible to the Senior Pastor.
- **Church Board** - responsible for the more pragmatic matters associated with the Vision and day to day administration. The Church Board is responsibly to the Elders.

Further governance and policies are available through the Church Office or on our church website at www.nvbc.info/policies

Statement Of Beliefs

From our Constitution, Ministry Partners hold the following statements of belief to be true:

- The Trinity of the Godhead.
- The deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- The sinfulness of man.
- The atonement for the sin of man by our Lord Jesus Christ.
- The need of the Holy Spirit for conversion, empowerment and ministry.
- The Divine inspiration and supreme authority of the scriptures.
- The visible personal return of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- The resurrection of the dead.
- Rewards and punishment in a future state.
- The Baptism of believers by immersion or by other means if immersion is not possible.
- The reality and personality of Satan.
- The priesthood of all believers exercising the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

We recognise that people come from a range of church backgrounds and will have variety of views regarding secondary matters. At NVBC we see the value of Augustine's statement:

"In essentials, unity; in doubtful matters, liberty; in all things, charity"

We are looking for partners who are sold out to God and who seek to actively follow him in all areas of life. When someone wants to become a partner with NVBC it is essential that they are committed to God in a manner consistent with our statements of belief.

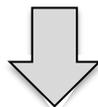
Section 4

want to become a ministry partner?

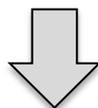


If after completing the Ministry Partnership Seminar you want to become a Ministry Partner, the following are the next steps:

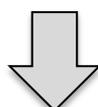
Let your seminar leader know you want to become a Ministry Partner



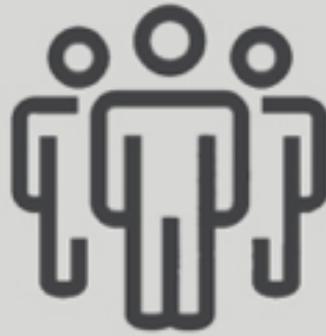
Your seminar leader will then invite you to complete and Ministry Partnership Application which they'll pass on to the Elders



The Elders will prayerfully consider the application



If the Elders affirm your application, a pastor will contact you to formally welcome you into Ministry Partnership during a service



At Narara Valley Baptist Church there are a range of next steps we encourage you to consider as you journey with God and His people. These include:

Small Groups

Connect Groups
Discipleship Groups
Renewal Retreat Groups

Volunteering

Leading

Online Giving



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